

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT

Replace the abstract with the following rewritten version:

“A method for protecting a tuyere assembly ~~(12)~~ and a refractory lining of a furnace, and in particular a blast furnace, against damage caused by expansion of the refractory lining. This method ~~comprises the steps of~~ includes providing a clearance ~~(40)~~ between the tuyere assembly ~~(12)~~ and a refractory lining portion ~~(16)~~ below the tuyere assembly ~~(12)~~ and monitoring this clearance ~~(40)~~ by means of a displacement sensor ~~(50)~~.

(Fig. 1)”